

Parsons, Henry M. (Henry Martyn),  
1828-1913

First Presbyterian Church in  
Toronto and Knox Church, 1820-1890.  
Toronto, 1890.



1820



Knox Church,

TORONTO



1890



BIOGRAPHICAL  
SKETCHES AND REVIEW

---

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

TORONTO

AND

KNOX CHURCH.

---

1820 - 1890.

---

TORONTO:

OXFORD PRESS: TIMMS & CO., PRINTERS, 13 ADELAIDE ST. EAST.

1890.



## PREFACE.

---

IN the multitude of changes taking place in a large congregation, it is often true that the moulding and formative influences of the past are forgotten, because not condensed in a consecutive and permanent record.

To prevent this loss, and give a brief history of Knox Church, the following biographical sketches have been compiled.

The materials are collected from many sources, and in a few years would be inaccessible for this purpose. This is especially true of the chief benefactor of the congregation at its formation, and of the early pastors. At the request of the Deacon's Court the sermon preached at the close of ten years' service, in April, 1890, is appended.

Recognizing with humble gratitude the gracious guidance, of God in the past, and earnestly entreating His continued blessings, this Review is respectfully presented to members and adherents by the Pastor as a New Year's souvenir for 1891.

HENRY M. PARSONS.





# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE.
JESSE KETCHUM - - - - -	7
REV. JAMES HARRIS - - - - -	II
REV. ROBERT BURNS, D.D. - - - - -	14
REV. ALEXANDER TOPP, D.D. - - - - -	20
CONNECTING LINKS - - - - -	32
SERMON, AND REVIEW OF TEN YEARS - - - - -	35



# BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES AND REVIEW.

---

JESSE KETCHUM.\*

THE subject of this sketch was born March 31st, 1782, in Spencertown, Columbia County, New York. His mother died when he was six years of age and his father placed him with a tanner to learn the trade, where he remained until he was nineteen, at which time he left the country and settled in Toronto, C. W., then a small town known as "Little York." Having obtained possession of a tannery, he started in business for himself and there laid the foundation of his wealth and usefulness.

Mr. Ketchum was brought up a Presbyterian, but first united with the Church of England, that being the only church in the place. In 1816 a Methodist Church was organized, and he left the Church of England to assist that. In the same year he set apart two acres of land for the site of a Presbyterian Church, on which he built a brick house, 50 by 30 feet, in which a church was organized in 1820, under the pastoral care of Rev. James Harris, who afterwards became his son-in-law. Such was the origin of the large and flourishing church in Toronto, known as "Knox Church." For some years he occupied a seat in the Canadian Parliament.

Mr. Ketchum removed to Buffalo in 1845. Here he united with the First Church. He purchased a lot on North street as the site of his private residence, and a lot on Delaware street,

\*This sketch is chiefly from the Manual of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Buffalo; and from the Historical account by W. B. McMurrich, Esq., in Knox Church Reports for 1884.

which he afterwards presented to the Westminster Presbyterian Society, adding a gift of \$5,000.00 when the church was erected.

He was the owner of a large tract of land lying along what is now High street ; and this and other real estate investments here and in Toronto, by the growth of these cities, in course of time, rendered him very wealthy, and permitted his early retirement from business.

For twenty years he pursued his quiet labors of christian benevolence, occupying himself in the dispensation of his wealth in gifts and charities which must have aggregated an enormous sum. The public schools were a favourite object of his interest and affectionate care. Every child knew Father Ketchum. Annually he visited every one of the public schools, and bore with him gifts of books for every one, children and teachers alike.

In 1871 was founded the "Jesse Ketchum" Memorial Fund, by deed of trust executed September 7th by his executors, conveying to the City of Buffalo the sum of \$10,000.00 as a perpetual memorial. Its object was to act as an incentive to diligent study and correct deportment, to promote culture of mind, morals and manners, and to aid in making worthy citizens of the rising generation. Medals, books and other prizes are distributed each year under this deed.

The crowning manifestation of his generosity in Buffalo was the donation of a very valuable tract of land, five acres in extent, occupying one of the most beautiful locations in the city, bounded by Jersey, Thirteenth, Fourteenth and York streets, for the site of the Normal School. This block of land was valued in 1867 at \$30,000.00.

Engaged in his visits to the schools, he became chilled while riding about the city, and after a week of gradual sinking, he died peacefully on Saturday, September 7th, 1867, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

His funeral, which was held in the church, was attended by an immense concourse of people, many being unable to gain admittance. The Common Council attended in a body, as did the Principals of the public schools, and the children of West-

minster Sunday-school. The public schools were closed that day in honour to his memory. Many clergymen occupied the pulpit. The Rev. Dr. A. T. Chester preached the funeral sermon, and prayers were offered by Dr. Lord and Dr. Clark. An opportunity was offered, and many availed themselves of it, to look for the last time upon the kindly face of the dead. His remains were borne to their last resting place in Forest Lawn.

Westminster Church stands as a memorial of his generosity and Christian zeal. He planted it and sustained it. He served it as trustee, deacon and elder, and took an active part in its prayer meetings and Sunday-school. His heart was ever with it, and his purse was always open to it.

Mr. Ketchum made similar provision for the public schools of Toronto, as for Buffalo, and every year the wisdom and beneficence of this good man, speak to hundreds of children, and will speak for generations to come, forming impressions for good that will never be effaced. His good work for Knox Church is equally conspicuous.

When Rev. Mr. Harris organized a Presbyterian congregation in York in 1820, his efforts in this direction were ably seconded by the late Jesse Ketchum, Esq. ; and in the month of November, of that year, a meeting of Presbyterians and other friends was held, when it was agreed among those present to raise a subscription for the purpose of building a Presbyterian Church in York, and for the support of a minister, and other purposes connected therewith, and Messrs. C. Drummond, J. Carfrae and J. Ross, were appointed a committee to collect the same. The task of the committee, so far as related to the church building, was an easy one, for Mr. Ketchum generously came forward, and after agreeing to give (as he afterwards gave) the valuable lot of land now owned by the congregation, erected at his own expense the new church. The agreement under which he deeded the land, is one of the first things recorded. It was a valuable Christmas gift to the young church, and reads as follows :

YORK, 25th Dec., 1810.

"I promise to give for the above purpose Lots No. 3 and 4, lying between Hospital Street and Lot Street, in this town, and in building £125 *os. od. cy.*

(Signed,)                      JESSE KETCHUM."

In grateful acknowledgment of the gift thus handsomely bestowed, and in token of his high Christian character and untiring energy in behalf of the congregation, a tablet to his memory was placed in the vestibule of the church, by the members and adherents of the congregation, bearing the following inscription :

IN COMMEMORATION OF  
THE  
BENEVOLENT AND CHRISTIAN CHARACTER OF  
JESSE KETCHUM, ESQ.,

AND ALSO

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIS GENEROUS GIFT TO  
THE CONGREGATION OF THE GROUND ON WHICH THIS CHURCH  
IS BUILT, AND OF THE ADJOINING PROPERTY.

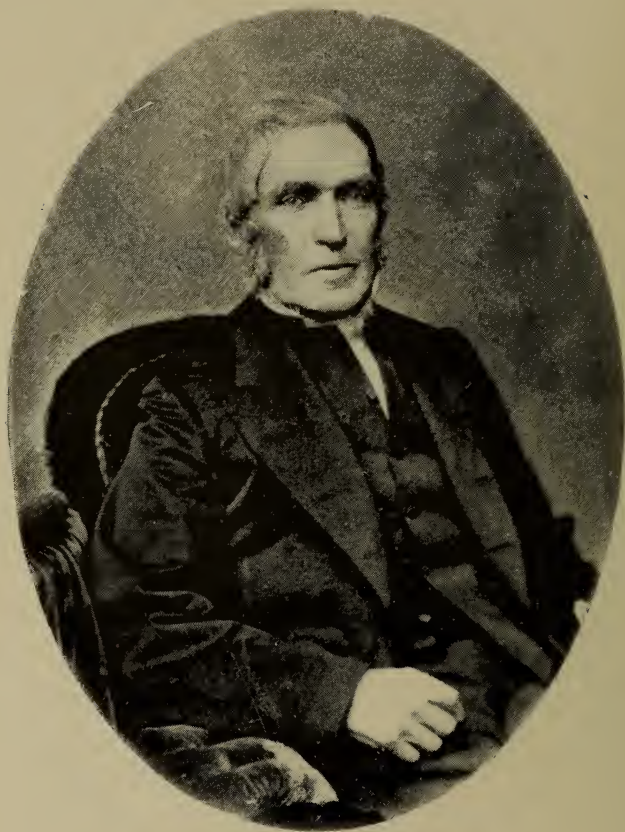
THIS TABLET

IS PLACED HERE IN COMPLIANCE WITH A UNANIMOUS  
RESOLUTION OF THE CONGREGATION.

IX MARCH, A.D. MDCCCLXX.

---





REV. JAMES HARRIS.

1823—1844.



## REV. JAMES HARRIS.

**M**R. HARRIS was born in Dumalt, County of Monaghan, in October 1795. His studies were pursued in Belfast and Edinburgh. He was a Licentiate of the Presbytery of Monaghan, in connection with the Secession Church in the North of Ireland. Having received the usual testimonies of good standing as a probationer, he sailed from Belfast for Canada, June 6th, 1820. On the 10th of August following he reached Brockville, and was urged by the Rev. Mr. Smart pastor of the Presbyterian Church of that town, to come to York (now Toronto) with as little delay as possible. Conducting religious services at various points along the road, he reached this place Aug 28th. No regular supply of preaching was then enjoyed by the few Presbyterians in the vicinity. Occasionally they were visited by the Rev. Mr. Jenkins of Richmond Hill and Scarboro.

There were then only two churches in the town of York, one, Church of England—under Rev. Dr. Strachan, afterward Bishop of Toronto—in a neat frame building on the present site of St. James' Cathedral, King street. The other was a Methodist Church, occupying a large, and, for that time, commodious frame building on King street west.

At that time there were only two Presbyterian ministers west of Kingston. One was Rev. Robert McDowall ; who came to Canada in 1798, and settled in Ernestown, where he laboured for many years. The other was Rev. William Jenkins of Richmond Hill, who came to Canada from the United States in 1817. He was originally from Scotland and belonged to the Anti-burgher Church in that land. For eighteen months, from first Sabbath in September, Mr. Harris conducted public worship in a large school-room. During this time the congregation increased in numbers, and on Sabbath, Feb. 18, 1822, they entered and occupied a new church edifice. This building stood on the present site

of Knox church. It was erected at the sole charge of Mr. Jesse Ketchum, and was the first building erected in York for a Presbyterian Congregation. The cost of the pews, pulpit and gallery, was assessed on the pews, and was paid by those who became pewholders. Mr. Harris was ordained pastor of this congregation, July 10, 1823, by a committee appointed by the Presbytery of Brockville, who had sustained the call of the congregation, moderated by Rev. Mr. Jenkins.

The first communion was dispensed by Rev. Mr. Harris, to the first Presbyterian Congregation in the town of York, assisted by Rev. Mr. Jenkins, the 14th of Sept., 1823. Twenty-eight members were present. The name given to this church was "The Presbyterian Church of York, U.C." The new meeting-house was formally opened on the 18th of February, 1822, and until 1827, was the only place of Presbyterian worship in the town.

During these years, and until the summer of 1844, Mr. Harris continued his labours in the ministry with great faithfulness, and to the acceptance of an attached and always increasing congregation. He was respected by all, and loved by many, who from intimate fellowship with him, knew his sterling worth, and his kind, sympathizing heart. In 1844 the disruption of the Presbyterian Church in Canada connected with the Kirk of Scotland took place. Quite a number of members at that time left St. Andrew's Church and formed a separate congregation. This new congregation had extended a call to Rev. Dr. Burns, of Paisley, and were preparing to build a new church.

At this juncture a proposal was made by the York Presbyterian Church, that the two bodies should unite and form one church, it being understood that Mr. Harris consented to retire on an annuity. Eventually this was arranged, and Mr. Harris retained his connection to the last, with Knox congregation as a ruling Elder. He was also interested and active in support of every benevolent object.

He was the first secretary of the "York Auxiliary Bible Society," formed in the year 1828. (His father-in-law, the late

Jesse Ketchum, Esq., was especially interested in this great and blessed cause, and while a substantial benefactor in his life-time of the Society, left testamentary provision which will keep his name honoured by generations who never knew him). For seven years Mr. Harris held this office, and in 1837 was again elected secretary. Resigning the office, he was elected a vice-president of the Society, and remained so until his death in 1873. Every duty he undertook was conscientiously discharged. He was modest and of retiring disposition, with no desire to push himself into notice. He lived to see the humble place of his adoption, the small and "Muddy York" of 1823, grow to the large and beautiful Toronto of 1873. With joy and thankfulness he witnessed the growth of that small congregation of twenty-eight members, to become one of the largest in membership and wealth in the Province of Ontario, or even in the Dominion of Canada.

At the ripe age of four-score years, after a useful and blameless life, he was called away to the heavenly rest. Respected by all as an upright man, a consistent Christian, and a faithful minister, his name will be honoured in history as one of the original founders and pioneers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The congregation of Knox Church have inscribed a marble tablet to his memory in the vestibule of the church; and a fitting monument in the Necropolis of Toronto marks his grave.

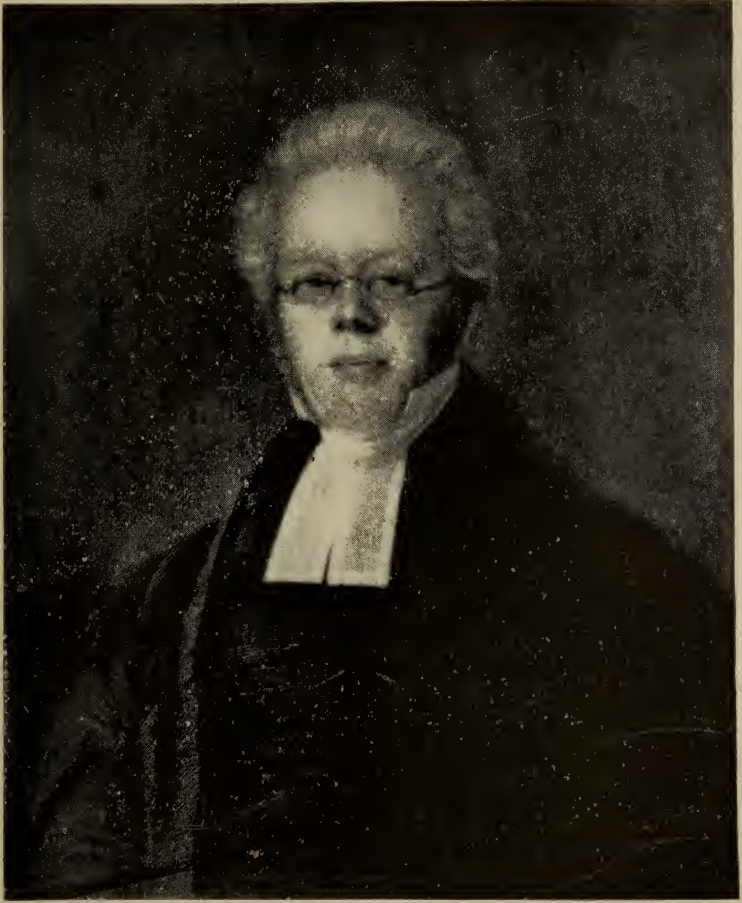
---

REV. ROBERT BURNS, D.D.\*

MR. BURNS was born in Paisley, Scotland, Feb. 13th, 1789. Having completed the preparatory course in the Grammar School, he entered College at Edinburgh, Oct, 1801, at the early age of twelve and a half years. He united with the Church on confession of Christ in 1806, and the same year commenced the study of theology. Graduating in 1808, for eighteen months he resided with Rev. Mr. Bonar, of Cramond, (uncle of his second wife), and was licensed to preach in March, 1810. His first sermon in the Parish Church of Cramond was from Romans, i. 16. The following June, and for four months, he supplied the pulpit of East Church in Perth. He was ordained and installed at Paisley, July 19th, 1811. He was now twenty-one years of age, and he entered vigorously into his first pastorate in this famous town, noted for its morality and intelligence. Rowland Hill, in his Journal, describes Paisley as the "paradise of Scotland." For thirty-four years he continued here to discharge his ministry with increasing celebrity. At the outset he showed the thorough training he had received in that method of expository lecturing, which has made the Scottish nation famous for its love and loyalty to the Word of God. Writing in review of this period he says, "Immediately after I was ordained I began a course of lectures in the morning service, first, on select portions of the Psalms, then on two or three of the smaller Epistles of Paul, then on the harmony of the Gospels. In the course of my ministry of thirty-four years in Paisley, I went over the whole of the New Testament, and the leading historical and prophetic parts of the old."

This was the foundation of his great fluency and passion in Biblical preaching. The greatest affliction of his life occurred

\*Compiled from Life and Times of Rev. Robert Burns, D.D., by his son, Rev. Robert F. Burns, D.D., of Halifax.



REV. ROBERT BURNS, D.D.

1844—1856.



in 1841, Nov. 14th, when his wife, for twenty-eight years his counsellor and comforter, and the devoted mother of his children, after a brief illness was "taken away with a stroke." This discipline of sorrow bore rich fruit in his life. While a most faithful teacher, a sympathizing and tender pastor, he was also actively engaged in every good work which could promote the well-being of society, and the salvation of the lost. He had intense interest in all missionary projects. He was early engaged in the establishment of Sabbath schools and Bible classes. For twenty years he was Secretary of the Paisley and East Renfredshire Bible Society. Six months after the foundation of the London Missionary Society an Auxiliary was formed in Paisley. For many years he was Secretary of this branch. His devotion to every good cause was manifest from the employment of his pen. He contributed to the onward movement of the Gospel by all these channels in forty-one essays and separate volumes.

In appreciation of his meritorious abilities and Christian activity the University of Glasgow, in 1828, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland.

Dr. Burns was a strong controversialist. He entered heartily into the defence of Protestant faith against Romanism: yet with such freedom from bitterness, and such a Christian sincerity that those friends who were opposed to his views, never lost their regard for him, nor their confidence in his genuine and holy character.

In the year 1843, the year of the memorable "disruption," Dr. Cunningham was appointed a deputy to the American churches on behalf of the building fund of the Free Church of Scotland. Dr. Burns was also asked to join him, and the deputies were urged to include Canada in their mission. The visit was the means ultimately of bringing Dr. Burns to duplicate his life, in the wonderful services rendered in Canada during his last twenty-five years. Dr. Burns' visit in 1844, was exceedingly effective, from the knowledge he had of the country through

his former connection with the Glasgow Colonial Society. He naturally won the hearts of the Scottish residents, and from his urgent appeals, the Canadas contributed above £2,000 to the Free Church. In many respects this visit was an ovation. On his return to Scotland he was in great demand for addresses on America and the Colonies. He was married Dec. 12th, 1844, to Miss Elizabeth Bell Bonar, daughter of Thomas Bonar, Esq., of the Grove, near Edinburgh. At this time earnest appeals came from Toronto. A call was sent from the congregation of Knox's Church. It was earnestly pressed by the needs and the prospects of the new and growing field.

Though his congregation at Paisley seemed dearer to him on his return than ever before, and he had resumed work after several months' absence, with great enthusiasm, the claims of Canada were so borne in upon his heart that he was led to accept the call and return a favourable answer. At the same time he received a nomination to the Chair of Theology in Toronto. The duties of both offices, pastor and professor, were, for a time, to be discharged by the same person. When once resolved to undertake this double burden in the new world, all the energy of his nature was displayed in preparing for the new departure.

The six weeks' voyage followed the departure from England, March 29th, 1844. On May 9th, he landed at Quebec. A few days were spent in Montreal. The biography adds "we reached Toronto in the *City of Toronto*, under the kind care of Capt. Thomas Dick (who has ever since proved a faithful friend) full of gratitude to that Loving Hand, which held the ocean in its hollow, and us on its bosom, and which brought us safely through perils of water to our desired haven."

The induction into the charge of Knox Church took place on 23rd of May. On Sabbath, the 25th, he commenced his pulpit labours.

Dr. Burns was pastor of Knox Church from May, 1845, until June, 1856. These eleven years embraced a vast amount of varied work. During part of the time he combined professorial with pastoral duty. To the pulpit of his new charge he brought substantially the same qualities which gave him so commanding



a position in his old. His discourses, even those most hastily prepared, bore marks of clearness of thought, correctness of diction and cogency of reasoning. They were delivered with earnestness and unction. The Scottish "Lecture" retained its own place. His sermons were often *in course*. He was faithful and systematic in his visiting. The Sabbath school was very dear to him, and to his Bible Class, he brought the insight of his matured experience, and the wealth of his extensive knowledge.

Immediately on his arrival in Canada, Dr. Burns began those periodical visits to the churches, which formed such a prominent feature of his New World life. One writes of him, "He did for the Presbyterian Church in the British Provinces what no other man could do. We owe much to him under God. He loved his Church, he knew every corner of the Church, and his life was bound up in the success of the cause of God in the Dominion."

During a three months' absence in the States and Lower Provinces in 1847, he was engaged all the time in preaching, collecting money for a College Library at Halifax, and visiting nearly all Free Church families, in both the Lower Provinces. The Knox Church building was burned that year while he was in Halifax. The last sermon heard in the Church was from his son, Dr. Burns, May 31st, 1847. He returned with as great speed as engagements in Halifax would allow, and in six weeks the foundation of the present structure was laid. The new church was opened Sept. 3rd, and to the work in hand he gave himself ardently, taking his part in all the public questions having an important bearing on the future of the land.

On the 17th of June, 1856, he was appointed to the Chair of Church History and Apologetics in Knox College, and loosed from the Pastorate. To the discharge of his duties in the Seminary he brought an enthusiasm which never flagged. Looking out for students—gathering books for the Library, or curiosities for the Museum—influencing friends to establish bursaries or scholarships—commending the institution in every way he could to the sympathies, the prayers and the liberality of the Church. The last article he penned was with reference to the college and it was a striking coincidence, which was noticed by many, that

the institution within whose walls so much of his time was spent and for whose interests he laboured and prayed so earnestly, became the scene of his last illness and death."

Dr. Burns rejoiced in being a missionary at large. He was early interested in the establishment of our missions in the North-West. He was also earnestly engaged in founding the mission among the French people of the Lower Province. His own views are recorded in a letter written in 1849.

"Immediately after the celebration of the Holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper in Knox's Church, in the beginning of September, I resolved in humble dependence on God, to carry out my intention of a missionary tour to Canada East, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In much mercy I have been enabled to do so, and eight Sabbaths, embracing nine weeks, were devoted to the work. Every colonial minister must be, to a greater or less extent, a missionary, and the time devoted to the mission field is by no means lost, even to the congregation more immediately his own. A missionary spirit is favourable to active effort in every way ; and an affectionate flock will lose nothing by extra evangelistic labours on the part of their pastor."

In a commemorative sermon, Aug. 22nd, 1869, Dr. King (now of Winnipeg) says : "It was his happiness to break ground in many a district, which has since borne abundant fruit, and in others to revive what was weak and ready to die—his exuberant energy and resolute will, serving, in not a few cases, to rally the friends of Presbyterian order, in districts where he found them weak and disheartened. The country was ripe for such a labourer when he came to it, and he saw and seized the opportunity, preaching far and near, undeterred by distances and severities of weather, which many persons of much younger years would have hesitated to encounter. In this way he contributed, we are safe in saying, more than any other individual, to give to the Presbyterian Church in this Province, the wide influence for good, which it holds to-day."

The last year of his life Dr. Burns was permitted to revisit the land of his birth, and with surprising vigor for his years, to address the General Assembly, and take active part in meetings

of various kinds in different places. It was indeed a farewell visit, crowning an active ministerial service, without cessation or interruption for nearly sixty years. His most wonderful powers of mind were active and clear almost to the last. One of the first students licensed by Dr. Burns in Presbytery, Rev. Robert Wallace, of Toronto, says of him from intimate knowlege, after enumerating prominent qualities of mind and heart. "Another feature of his character which should not be forgotten was his *fervent prayerfulness*. Here was the *secret of his power* as a worker for Christ."

At the ripe age of eighty years and six months, on the 19th of August, 1869, Dr. Burns passed from the toils of earth to the rest of heaven. A marble tablet in the vestibule of the church records the gratitude and respect of the congregation, which first enjoyed in the maturity of his pains, his abounding labours ; and a massive monument of Aberdeen granite marks, in Toronto Necropolis, the inn where the pilgrim sleeps, till the eternal morning dawns. The mottoes of the Burns and Bonar families, graven in the granite, are his appropriate epitaph :

VERITAS VINCIT.  
DENIQUE CÆLUM.

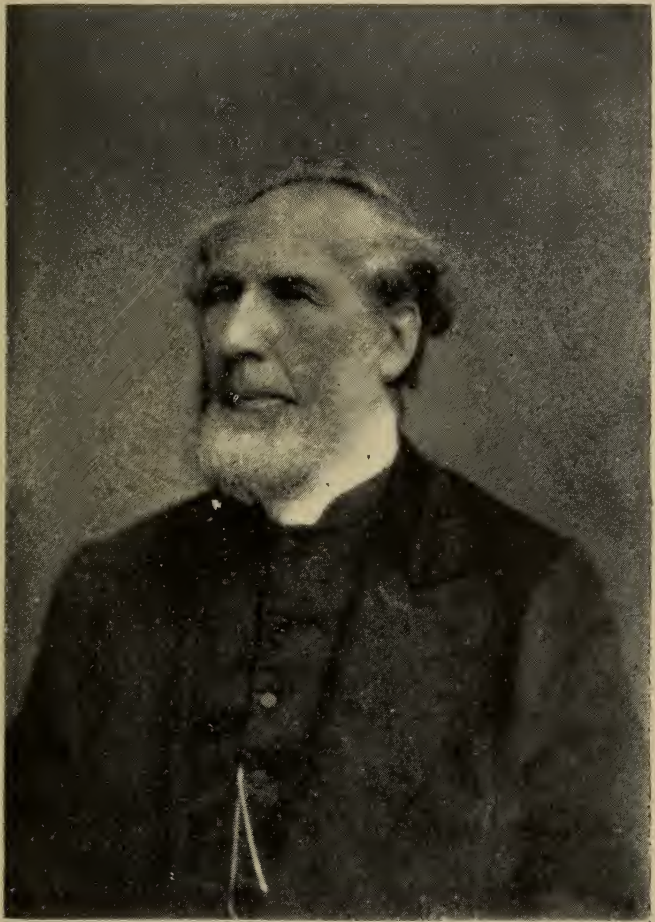
---

REV. ALEXANDER TOPP, D.D.\*†

THE Rev. Alexander Topp was born in 1813, at the beautiful farm-house known as Sheriffmill, near Elgin, in Scotland. He received his early education at the Academy in that town, which he left at the age of fourteen, having carried off in the course of his career the principal prizes put up for competition. The Elgin Academy was a local institution at that time of no small importance in the north of Scotland, and its fame was considerably increased by the fact, that the subject of this sketch, and half-a-dozen of his fellow-students, succeeded immediately after leaving it, in winning amongst them a very large proportion of the bursaries, offered for competition by the Aberdeen University, to which they went. Dr. Topp's collegiate course, both in Arts and Theology, was begun and completed in King's College, in that town, where he was licensed to preach in 1836, at the early age of twenty-one. During his University course he obtained one of the highest scholarships in the gift of the institution, and held it for four years. Immediately after being licensed, he was appointed assistant to the pastor of the parish church in his native town, and when, a few months afterwards, the death of the minister left the charge vacant, the Town Council and Congregation petitioned Government for the presentation of his youthful assistant, which was immediately granted by the Crown. During the five years which elapsed between his installation and the Disruption, Dr. Topp presided successfully over his large and united congregation. When the exodus of 1843 took place he felt it his duty to cast in his lot with the Free Church seceders, and nearly all the members of

\*In the year 1856 the position of Pastor to Knox Congregation, held by Dr. Burns for ten years, was resigned, in order to enter upon the duties of the chair of Church History and Apologetics in Knox College. The vacant pulpit was offered to Dr. Topp; to the Rev. Dr. Arnot, of Edinburgh; and to the Rev. Dr. McKenzie, of Dunfermline; all of whom declined the call. After an interregnum of two years, the call to Dr. Topp was renewed and finally accepted.

†From Annual Reports, 1879 and 1881.



REV. ALEXANDER TOPP, D.D.

1858—1879.



his congregation, including the Session, went with him out of the Establishment. A new church edifice and manse were soon erected, and he was thus prevented from experiencing the worst of the troubles, felt by many of his seceding brethren who were less fortunately circumstanced. After the Disruption the work of Dr. Topp, not only at home, but throughout the Presbytery and Synod, was necessarily very great. There was so much to do in organizing the new and disendowed churches, as well as in preaching the Gospel to congregations not yet supplied with pastors, and to no man, in these respects, was the Free Church more indebted in those northern parts than to Dr. Topp. His health indeed suffered from these labours, so that in 1845, he had to withdraw for a season, and spend a winter abroad in Italy. He remained nine years after the Disruption in the pastorate of the same congregation, which continued united, in spite of its size, as long as he was its pastor, but divided into flourishing bodies immediately after his departure, which took place in 1852. In that year he received and accepted a call to Free Roxburgh Church, in Edinburgh, where he remained for six years. During that time his congregation outgrew the edifice in which it worshipped, and measures were about to be taken to erect a new one, when he decided on accepting a call to Knox Church, Toronto.

Rev. Mr. Cowan, his successor at Elgin, in his memorial sermon, speaks thus of his work in Edinburgh, and of his direction to his last field of labour, and also of his admirable qualifications for the new post : " I know, from some of themselves, how the members of Roxburgh Church valued and loved him, and how the congregation increased and then flourished under him. I know also of further work he had to do in connection with the examination of students in Divinity of that day, and, as one of those students, I know in what high esteem and regard he was held by them. But He, who orders the steps of a good man, had a large field in view for him, and in 1858, he saw it to be his duty to accept a twice offered call to Canada. It has been mentioned to me that wishing to consult with his brother as to his duty on that occasion, the two met at

Aberdeen. They spent most of the night in prayer, and it was in the morning that light broke for him upon his path. It was assuredly no misleading light, but the light that comes from the Father of lights. If Dr. Topp was important in Elgin, he was more so in Toronto. Going there at a time when the Presbyterian Church needed to keep pace with the advancing spirit and increasing population of the country; and when true leadership, and prompt action was indispensable, Dr. Topp was, under the guidance of God's Providence, in his right place. The keel had been fairly laid, but the timbers required to be prepared and fitted, and the great ship welded together, and for this there was need of wise master builders, and one of the chief of these was found in Dr. Topp. So experienced already in church business, so distinguished for sense and suavity, for truth and tact, with so much cheerful gravity and modest dignity, and with the grace of God in his heart, Dr. Topp was a God-sent man to Canada for its necessity at that era." He fulfilled the duties of an honoured pastorate for more than twenty-one years, in the charge of Knox Church. In 1858, when he entered upon his work, the membership was about three hundred. It steadily increased during his ministry, and though there were peaceful removals for establishing new congregations, at the time of his death the church was one of the largest and strongest in the Dominion. During his ministry, the West Presbyterian Church, the Westminster Church (formerly Charles St.) and the College St. Church were founded, and from the members who were trained under his ministry, and from his wise counsels, much of subsequent growth and prosperity, under God, was derived.

Although he came to Toronto a stranger, Dr. Topp was not long in attaining to a high position in the community as well as in the Church. His standing in the latter is shewn by his election to the Moderatorship of the General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church in 1868, the first instance of a unanimous nomination to that office by the various Presbyteries of the Church. With the latter movement, in favour of Union with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, in connection with the



Church of Scotland, he was from first to last in thorough sympathy, and to him belongs no inconsiderable share of the honour of making the union an accomplished fact. He was appointed Convener of the Union Committee of his own Church, and acted as secretary of the Joint Committee representing the various negotiating bodies. The long and arduous labours of himself and his colleagues were at length successful, and in 1876 the well-merited honour was conferred upon him of being unanimously elected to fill the Moderator's chair in the General Assembly of the United Church, his only predecessor in that high position being the Rev. Dr. Cook, Principal of Morrin College, Quebec. Dr. Topp always took a deep interest in educational matters within the Church of which he was so distinguished a member, and was for several years Chairman of the Board of Management of Knox College. His degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him voluntarily by the University of Aberdeen, his own *alma mater*. Every reasonable scheme for promoting social reforms, or alleviating the miseries of the unfortunate, always found, in Dr. Topp, a genuine sympathizer, and some of them found in him an active promoter. The estimate of the affection and admiration, which bound the hearts of his people to this most accomplished and worthy minister, cannot be better shown than by simply grouping the many testimonials to his worth and his work, by those who knew him best.

Though he had suffered much for a year or two from heart disease, his death was at last sudden and unexpected. He was engaged in visiting a sick parishioner, and feeling a faintness, asked for permission to recline for a little while on the sofa. He appeared to be sinking rapidly, and before the physicians who had been summoned arrived, and before the return of Mrs. Topp, who had gone for some medicine for him, he expired without a struggle.

During the preceding summer Dr. Topp visited Scotland, and though forbidden to preach by his medical adviser there he was induced to officiate once for his old congregation at Elgin.

The occasion was exciting and the audience very large, and

the consequence was an aggravation of his disorder. On his return to Toronto, he tendered his resignation of his pastoral charge, but it had not been accepted by the Presbytery when his sudden and lamented death, dissolved the long-standing connection between him and the flock over which he had the oversight. The resolution of the City Council indicated the esteem with which he was regarded by fellow citizens. "This Council desires to record its deep regret at the sudden death of the Rev. Alexander Topp, D.D., who for nearly a quarter of a century has been a prominent citizen, and one of the leading clergymen of the Presbyterian Church in Toronto, who during all that time, has been active and earnest in assisting and promoting the benevolent and charitable institutions of the City. The Council desire to offer to his bereaved family an expression of their sincere sympathy and respectful condolence."

The following record from the minutes of the Deacon's Court, and the Session of Knox Congregation, will give some idea of the great bereavement sustained by the people of his charge, and of the hold he had upon their hearts :

"It hath pleased Almighty God to remove from the pastorate of this church our honoured and lamented Minister, the Rev. Alexander Topp, D.D. The suddenness of the event startled and thrilled the entire community, but specially the members and adherents of his own congregation; and this evening particularly reminds us, with deep sorrow and regret, of him who so wisely and courteously was wont to discharge the incumbent duties of the chair. May we all feel, in word and act, as if under his happy inspiration."

"Though unknown to the great majority of the congregation, it was early in the year realized by Dr. Topp himself, that at least temporary cessation from pastoral work was imperative, and it was thought that a re-visit to his native land might prove beneficial. The congregation eagerly sought information from time to time of our Pastor's state of health, and were greatly disappointed when in the good providence of God, he was brought back to Toronto without the regained health and strength so ardently desired. Indeed a marked

deteriorated condition of health was painfully visible to the most casual observer, and Dr. Topp himself became so impressed with the conviction that his active pastorate in Knox Church must terminate, that the resignation of his charge was speedily laid on the table of the Presbytery. It cannot fail to be regarded, under the circumstances, as a matter of sincere congratulation that the Presbytery had not accepted the resignation, for it affords the congregation the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that our departed Pastor died "in harness." The Master came and called him suddenly from his work to his reward. It was an Enoch-like translation; "and he was not, for God took him."

The evening of Monday, the 6th October, 1879, on which our beloved Pastor so peacefully entered into his rest, was that on which the usual monthly meeting of the Deacons' Court was held. The Court on being constituted, and informed by the chairman of the melancholy occurrence, at once postponed the consideration of business, and adopted the following minute :—

"That this Court, whilst humbly and submissively acknowledging the supreme hand of Almighty God, in the sudden removal by death, of the Rev. Alexander Topp, D.D., the Pastor of Knox Church, and the Moderator of this Court, takes the earliest opportunity of placing on record its deep sense of the loss sustained by the Court, its sincere appreciation of the high Christian character, personal services, sagacious counsels, urbane and dignified demeanour, uniform courtesy, and untiring devotion to the best interests of this Court, manifested by him as its Moderator, from its inception under his auspices, down to the close of his life; and its confident belief, that throughout the existence of this Court, the name and services of Dr. Topp will ever be held in honoured reverential remembrance, and in its deliberations the recollection of his influence will be so enduring, that "he being dead yet speaketh."

"The Court also desires to record its heartfelt sympathy with the bereaved widow and family, whose loss is indeed unspeakably great, and would prayerfully commend them to the unfailling love

and consolation of the Divine Comforter, and to the blessed thought, amidst the bitterness of their grief, that their mourned one has entered upon his unending rest, and his reward unspeakable and full of glory."

The Session also adopted the following minute :—

" That the Rev. Alexander Topp, D.D., our beloved Pastor, having been suddenly called away from his earthly duties since the last meeting of the Session, the Court takes this, the first opportunity afforded them, of placing on record the following minute in reference thereto :—

For over twenty-one years it has been the privilege of some of the members of Session, to have been intimately associated with Dr. Topp in the spiritual oversight of this Congregation, and, whether for a longer or shorter period, every member of the Court has to bear willing testimony to the cordial and affectionate relations that have ever existed between the members of the Session and their beloved Pastor, and it is with profound regret that they mourn his sudden removal.

His earnest piety, his well matured judgment, combined with his rare administrative talents, enabled him at all times so to direct the proceedings of the Court as to render them satisfactory to all.

His kind and sympathizing manner with those in distress, his constant attention to every call made upon his time, his unvarying devotion, beyond his strength, to the interests of his Congregation, endeared him to all, and his memory will long remain green in many a heart.

The Session further desire to offer their warmest sympathy to Mrs. Topp and family in their sad bereavement, trusting that the Everlasting Arms may be around and about them to comfort and sustain in their present trial."

The funeral obsequies were attended by a large concourse of citizens and friends in the Church where his ministry ended, and were conducted by Rev. Prof. McLaren, of Knox College. The remains were laid to rest in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Rev. Dr. Reid officiating at the grave. By appointment of Toronto Presbytery, sermons were preached the Sabbath following in

Knox Church, commemorative of the life and work of the late Pastor. Rev. Dr. Reid, his life-long intimate friend, led the morning service, taking his discourse from Zeph. iii. 17 : " The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty : He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy ; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." No one could more faithfully or tenderly speak of Dr. Topp at such an hour, than one who could go back over a journey of half a century, in which with ever increasing and mutual affection they had walked together.

In the evening of the same day, an appropriate and impressive discourse was given by Rev. Prof. Gregg, D.D., of Knox College. From long and intimate acquaintance, first as Pastor of Cooke's Church, and then in the Theological Hall, he was able to sketch the noble qualities and gifts of his departed friend, so as sensibly to reveal not only the great loss sustained by the bereaved congregation, but also to illustrate and magnify the grace of God to him, and to them, in having had such a lengthy, united and prosperous connection in the Church on earth. His text was Rev. i. 17, 18 : " And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not ; I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death." After suitable opening, in which the presence of the ever-living and ever-present Head and Prince of the Church was exalted, the preacher in a few sentences subjoined referred to the character and eminence of Dr. Topp in the varied relations he had held, and also to the efforts of his first charge to recall him to the scene of his early labours.

" Your pastor, whose sudden removal we this day deplore, was indeed a standard-bearer, a prince, and a great man in Israel. His natural gifts and endowments, his vigorous intellect, his sound judgment, his thorough conscientiousness, his resolute will, his commanding presence and noble bearing, marked him as a ruler among men, while his kindly disposition and genial nature, enthroned him in the hearts of all who knew him. By close and diligent study in early years, his natural gifts were

successfully cultivated, so that in school and college he occupied a distinguished place; and the habits of patient and accurate study, he acquired in youth, were retained by him to the very last. By the grace of God, he was led to consecrate all his gifts to the work of the ministry of the Gospel, in which he was abundantly honoured, as he was eminently faithful. Not a few of those who attended his ministry in Scotland—in Elgin and in Edinburgh—are scattered over different parts of this Dominion, and again and again have I heard testimony borne by them to the ability, earnestness, and success with which he laboured in his native land. It was, indeed, touching to mark the affectionate manner in which his memory was cherished by those whom he had instructed and tended, in the earlier years of his minister. From the manner in which he was spoken of, I can well understand the earnestness with which his congregation in Elgin sought to recall him as their pastor from Edinburgh and Toronto, and I can well imagine the profound interest with which the last sermons he ever preached were listened to by the crowds, who flocked to hear him in the town in which the first years of his ministry were spent, and with what profound sorrow they will hear the tidings from this far distant land, of his sudden removal by death.”

The following expressive testimonies from the Presbytery of Toronto, from the Session of Free Elgin Church, and from Free Roxburgh Church, Edinburgh, will in this connection shew the commanding influence, and abiding results of Dr. Topp's life work.

“The Presbytery would record its deep sense of the loss sustained by it and by the whole Church in the removal by death of the Rev. Dr. Topp. Early ordained to the ministry, he laboured in his native land—first in Elgin, then in Edinburgh—with great acceptance and with increasing usefulness for twenty years. Since the year 1858, as minister of Knox Church in this city, he has exercised his office with a devotedness, prudence and success rarely equalled, securing for himself the veneration, and the warm and confiding affection of his large congregation. As a member of this Presbytery he was greatly beloved for his

unfailing kindness and courtesy, while his excellent knowledge of Church business and zealous discharge of all duties laid upon him, his wisdom in counsel, his unflinching conscientiousness, as well as the admirable union of dignity and gentleness in his character, made him to be revered and greatly confided in by all his brethren. But the services of Dr. Topp were of the highest value to the whole Church, and no member of its successive General Assemblies was more entirely the object of esteem, confidence and affection. While his name is honourably connected with nearly every important movement in every department of her work since he came to this land, it will be especially remembered on account of his great services in the cause of union in 1861 and 1875. Dr. Topp was warmly interested in the cause of theological education, and to Knox College especially he rendered on several occasions important and valuable services."

The minute of Session of Free Elgin Church shows the strength of early ties, and the power of his first ministry.

#### MINUTE OF SESSION OF FREE ELGIN CHURCH.

"The Kirk Session having heard, with very deep sorrow, of the sudden and unexpected death of the Rev. Alexander Topp, D.D., of Toronto, unanimously agree to place on record an expression of their profound sorrow as well as that of the whole congregation which they represent, at the melancholy tidings of his decease. They feel they may be well indulged in their regrets and sorrow, for, next to his own congregation, they believe they are entitled to take their place in the long line of mourners who bewail a prince and great man fallen in Israel. The tie that bound him and them together was a strong one. Few ministers have occupied a warmer or more loving place in the hearts of their people. He belonged to us and we to him—both delighting in the relationship which mutually subsisted. It was in this town he commenced his greatly honoured ministry, and in the mysterious providence of God it was in the Free High Church he preached his last sermon. His memory will long be cherished by us, as well as in many a household in Elgin. He was a well furnished man of God, mighty in the

Scriptures, strong in prayer, taught of the Spirit, in labour abounding, ever aiming at permanent usefulness, at all times imitating the Master's example. His services to the Church throughout these northern counties generally, in Disruption times, are well known and appreciated, and it is gratifying to think that to the end of his life he was honoured to be a standard-bearer among our Presbyterian Churches.

“The Kirk Session, therefore, every member of it, as well as the whole congregation, deeply sympathize with his bereaved congregation, and afflicted family, in the calamity which has overtaken them. Their prayer is for the one, that the Lord Himself, in His own good time and way, may supply their great need, and for the others, that He may be a Father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow; as one whom his mother comforteth so may the Lord comfort them.”

The following is from minute of Session of Free Church Roxburgh Church, Edinburgh :

“The Session, having heard of the decease of the Rev. Dr. Topp, of Toronto, agree to put on record the expression of their sincere sorrow, and of their sympathy with the widow and daughters of Dr. Topp. They record this grateful remembrance of the faithful and devoted labours of Dr. Topp, while he was minister of Roxburgh congregation; he was greatly beloved and highly esteemed; his character and his ministrations served greatly to commend the Gospel.”

Testimonials to the value of his services in Council, in active administration of affairs, and in earnest sympathy with the suffering and poor, were given by the Board of the House of Industry of Toronto, and by the Directors of Toronto Home for Incurables. To the organization and care of this last Public Benefaction he gave great thought, and was instrumental in laying the foundation of the present Home, which to-day, in its provisions for the most unfortunáte class of sufferers, exceeds the hopeful anticipation expressed in his address on that occasion. The loss felt by those connected with Dr. Topp in the Board of Management, is fitly recorded in the resolution laid upon their minutes :



“That the Board desires to express its deep sense of the serious loss which it has sustained in the recent death of the Rev. Alexander Topp, D.D., whom it has pleased Almighty God to remove from the scene of his earthly labours.

“They cannot but recall the fact that it was owing to a great extent to his exertions that the Toronto Home for Incurables was founded. And during the whole period of its operation, up to the time of his death, as Chairman of the Board of Management, he manifested such zeal in its interests, that much of the success which has been vouchsafed the institution may, humanly speaking, be attributed to him. The members of the Board desire at the same time to tender to the bereaved family of Dr. Topp an expression of their respectful sympathy, and pray that in this the hour of their affliction, they may be abundantly comforted with the blessed hope of the Gospel of Christ.”

A beautiful monument, erected over his grave by the ladies of the congregation, marks the resting place of Dr. Topp in Mount Pleasant Cemetery. A marble tablet in the vestibule of the Church, placed by the Trustees of the congregation, suitably commemorates his virtues, and attests the loving remembrance in which he is held by the people of his charge.

---

## CONNECTING LINKS.\*

AFTER the union between "the Presbyterian Church of York," and those Presbyterians who had resolved to dissolve their connection with "The Established Church of Scotland," and before the arrival of Dr. Burns, who had accepted the call of the new congregation, called "Knox Church," the Rev. Andrew King of Glasgow, N. B. (afterwards Professor of Divinity at Halifax), was appointed by Presbytery ad interim Pastor from Jan. to March, 1846. Dr. King dispensed the first communion, and thus organized the new and united congregation. Rev. Henry Esson was interim Moderator of Session from March to May, 1845.

On the retirement of Dr. Burns from the pastorate, in June, 1856, after a fruitful ministry of twelve years, two calls were moderated in during that year. One to Rev. Mr. Fraser of Greenock, and the second to Rev. J. D. Paxton of East Campbell Street Church, Glasgow. Both ministers were led to decline the call, and during the remainder of the vacancy, Dr. Burns and others kindly supplied the pulpit.

On account of the heavy and onerous labors of the charge, from the increase of the congregation, in the year 1868, Rev. William Burns (at present General Agent of Knox College, and of the scheme for support of Aged and Infirm Ministers), was secured as an assistant to the pastor. His services were highly appreciated by the congregation.

In the year 1887, Rev. Mr. Wilson (now missionary at Neemuch India), was called to help Dr. Topp the first three months of the year, and the Rev. Mr. Millingen during the last part of the same year.

A special meeting of the congregation was held Nov. 5th, 1877, to consider the report of a committee appointed to secure a colleague for Dr. Topp. They recommended the Rev. David Inglis, D.D., of Brooklyn, N.Y. The call was made unanimously

\*From Annual Reports, 1884.

and prosecuted before the Presbytery of Toronto. Being cordially sustained, a deputation from Knox Church waited on Dr. Inglis, and presented the call to him. Although seriously ill at the time, he took it into consideration with every prospect of acceptance. Soon after, however, he was called away from his earthly labors to his heavenly rest. His death was deeply lamented by the congregation to which he ministered, and by the members of this church.

In the year 1878, Dec. 4th, the colleague committee, appointed the previous May 27th, made a report in favor of the Rev. Mr. Millingen, as colleague to the pastor. The report was approved, and the preliminary steps taken for having a call sustained. The matter, however, owing to various circumstances was not pressed, and no further action was taken before the Presbytery. In April, 1879, Mr. John Ross, B.A., a graduate of Knox College (and now settled over Melville Church, Brussels), was secured to assist Dr. Topp, and ministered to the congregation with much acceptance during the summer and part of the autumn. Upon the death of Dr. Topp, the Presbytery appointed Rev. Dr. Reid, interim Moderator of Session. A committee of supply was chosen by the congregation, and an opportunity afforded of having various clergymen for several months. At a meeting held Jan. 28th, 1880, it was resolved to call a minister, and the session was asked to moderate in a call as soon as possible.

At a congregational meeting, February 11th, the call was duly read by Rev. Dr. Read, and on motion it was resolved that the blank in the call be filled with the name of the Rev. Henry M. Parsons, pastor of Lafayette street (Pres.) church, Buffalo, N. Y. A committee was chosen to prosecute the call before Presbytery. The call was sustained, presented to Mr. Parsons and accepted. He was inducted to the office of pastor, April 15th, 1880.

The history of this congregation as connected with its leaders, would be incomplete without brief mention of some names who have filled the office of Elder, and aided largely, in the success of the church, by their wisdom and fidelity. Rev. James Harris,

the first Presbyterian Minister in Toronto, was a ruling elder for fourteen years, from 1857 till his death in 1873.

Rev. William Reid, D.D., in addition to his services as interim Moderator, during brief periods of Dr. Topp's absence from the city, and for a period after his death, was also a member of Session, and clerk of the court from 1859 to 1867, when he resigned, to connect with the congregation in Charles street, now Westminster Church, where for many years, in addition to his responsible cares in the church at large, he has been senior elder in the session of that congregation.

But the name having longest record, and from among the congregation worthy of highest remembrance, is of one who served in this church as a ruling elder, for nearly a generation, and whose influence was widely felt for good in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Hon. John McMurrich, the senior elder in the congregation was called away to his rest on the 13th, of February, 1883.

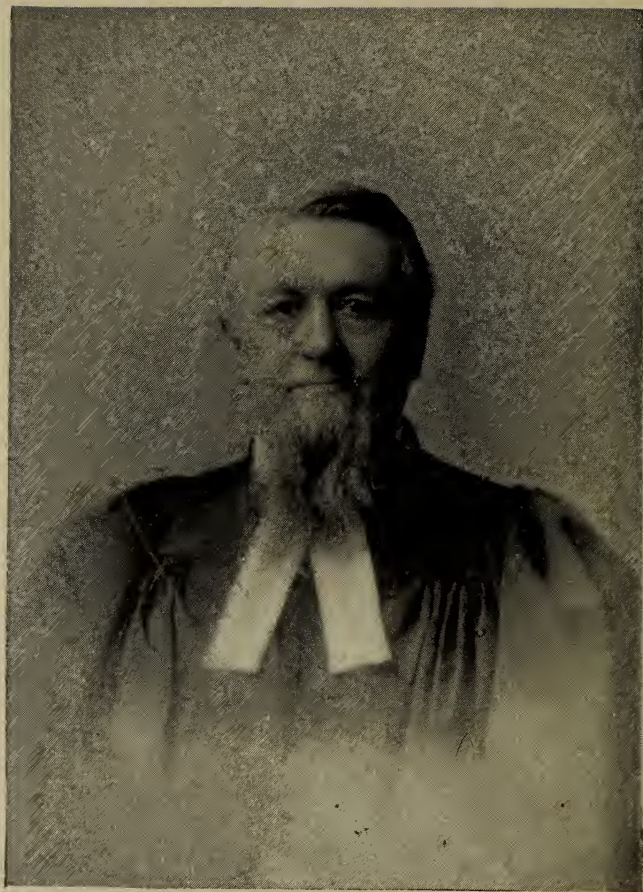
The congregation concurred in the following resolution at their Annual Meeting, held on 30th, January, 1884, and adopted it as the expression of their feelings, being the resolution passed by the Session a short time after his decease, at a special meeting of that Court :

*Resolved*—That the Session take the earliest opportunity of recording their deep sense of the great loss this congregation, the church at large, the whole community, and especially the bereaved widow and family, have sustained by his removal. They would also record their expression of the high esteem in which he was held by this court, for his unswerving fidelity to truth and righteousness, his faithful and unwearied services in the Master's cause, and for the deep unflinching interest he manifested in everything pertaining to Knox Church, during the long period of more than thirty years.

“As a ruling elder he has rendered valuable services by wise counsels, by earnest persevering prayer, and by abundant labors, to the congregation, to its ministers, and to the whole church.”

A tablet of marble to his memory, in the vestibule of the Church, testifies to the high esteem in which he was held by Knox congregation.





REV. HENRY M. PARSONS, D.D.

1880—

## SERMON,\* AND REVIEW OF TEN YEARS.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee. TITUS, ii., 11-15.

THE things peculiar to the Gospel ministry are here specified. They are vitally connected with the promises of God to His people. In reviewing the work of this Church for *ten years*, I desire to illustrate by facts, the power of these Divine truths briefly recited in the text.

1. The grace of God bringing salvation to all men has been manifested.

2. The Gospel teaches that this grace incarnate is self-denial, sacrifice and holy living, in the believer.

3. The peculiar hope of the Gospel to each believer is, the "appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus" in glory.

4. The object of his first appearing as a sin offering was to redeem from sin, and purify to Himself, a peculiar people.

5. The main character of this people, so redeemed and so purified, is zeal in good works.

It has been the aim of my ministry among you to "speak these things," to admonish those who reject them, and to "exhort" you all to accept and practice these doctrines.

The ground on which we stand has been consecrated to the service and worship of the Presbyterian Church for 70 years. Upon this site (a gift to the congregation from Jesse Ketchum, of honoured memory) a brick building was erected as an house of worship, for the "Presbyterian Church of York," U. C., in the year 1821. The Rev. James Harris, of Belfast, Ireland, was inducted to the pastoral office here in 1823, and was the first settled Presbyterian minister in this town. He fulfilled the office faithfully the following 20 years. In 1844 a union was consummated between this first Church and the members of the Free Church of Scotland, then separating from the established Church,

\*Preached in Knox Church, Sabbath morning, April 20th, 1890, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the settlement of Rev. H. M. Parsons, D.D.

and the present organization, called Knox Church, was formed. A call was extended to Rev. Dr. Burns, of Paisley, Scotland, and he accepting, was inducted in 1845. With great diligence and power he fulfilled the pastorate till 1856. His ministry was greatly blessed and highly honoured, not only in this congregation, but throughout the whole Province. He was a missionary in the highest sense of the term, and was instrumental in founding many churches in our Presbyterian body, now flourishing and active in all good works. Rev. Alexander Topp, of Edinburgh, was unanimously called, and having accepted, was inducted to the pastoral office in 1858. Dr. Topp's ministry was most faithful and effective in many ways. His thorough maintainance of evangelical truth in the pulpit and in the Church Courts, not only gave Knox congregation an honoured place among the churches, but also exerted a wide influence in effecting a union of the three branches of the Presbyterian Church in the one organization known as the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

As a Pastor, in sympathy, counsel, and tender interest, he greatly excelled, and his influence is still felt with deep impression on many to whom he ministered in holy things, in the important charges he filled in Scotland, as well as in this congregation.

It will be seen that the principles of the text have had practical application in this congregation from the beginning.

Ten years ago last January, I was asked to supply this pulpit for a Sabbath, and the following month was invited to the Pastorate of this congregation, and, accepting the call, was duly inducted to this office April 15th, 1880.

I count it a great favour to follow such able teachers who have laid the foundations, and built up the superstructure of this Church.

Believing most heartily the truths of the text, and welcomed most warmly by those who sought my services, I commenced my ministry with great joy, and can truly say, that no part of my ministerial service, now covering thirty-six years, has been attended with so much of personal delight, and manifest acceptance of the Lord, as the ten years commemorated to-day. It is fitting, therefore, simply to review the work, and trace a few reflections, for future encouragement and activity.

I. The Life of this Church has always been centred in Christ. Sovereign grace through Him, the Life and the Light of the world, has always been exalted. And this Life has been sought through His



Word. The open Bible, in the Church, as well as in the home and in private, has largely shaped the attention and the thoughts of this congregation. To this I attribute largely the great blessings we have enjoyed in spiritual refreshment, and in religious activities. The grace of God as personalized in the living, dying and risen Christ, has always had the chief place in the ministrations from this pulpit. Of Him the Holy Ghost testifies, and when we are thus looking unto Jesus, we are always receiving His promised blessing, and His indwelling life and presence.

II. This is further manifest from the growth of the Church.

Soon after my settlement, measures were taken to refit this building, and in removing the seats, modifying in a measure the space occupied, to make the whole house more commodious for worshippers. At the same time the resolution of the congregation to introduce the organ, as instrumental in the service of praise was resumed and carried into effect. To accomplish these ends required a large increase upon the current outlay, and the people responded heartily to the appeal. These changes were speedily effected, and have been enjoyed with comfort and thankfulness since that time. The moderation and harmony which have prevailed in regard to the administration of material affairs, are not the least of the many blessings for which we thank God to-day.

In the years under review, the growth of the Church in members has been peculiar from its steady and gradual increase from year to year till the last.

The names of 1,874 communicants have been during the ten years on the Roll of the Church. Of these, 549 by confession, and 890 by certificate, in all 1439 have been added under my ministry, while 946 have been withdrawn, leaving the number at this present date (April 20th), 928.

These additions, and this increase, have been in connection with the ordinary means of grace and under permanent ordinances. This is worth noting in these days of sensation, when much that is unscriptural in method is often proposed, for the reaching of sinners unsaved, and pointing them to Christ. A healthy life keeps growing. God has given us His Word and ordinances, that we may grow thereby. When a congregation becomes formal and worldly, so that the regular means of grace prove inoperative, when the manna of the Word is loathed by the hearers, and they demand the condiments of Egypt to satisfy their worldly and fleshly lusts, then there is necessity for some extraordinary

method. So God dealt with Israel in judgment, and so He often deals with His Church. Revival services have been productive of good, in arousing a church from the lethargy of spiritual death. Yet their history will show, I think, that in modern times they have been more effective in augmenting numbers, than in deepening spiritual life, and making Christians consistent in their testimony before men.

These methods have not been used in this congregation. There has always been manifested, since I have known you, a greater love for the interpretation and exposition of the Scriptures, and for the missionary prayer meetings of the Church, than for other and more popular methods of religious service.

The growth in mission work and consecration, the interest shown by so large a number in Sabbath schools, Bible classes, and the prayer meetings, are to me abundant evidences of your profiting in holy things, and of the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly the increase of our membership has not been from personal persuasion by the pastor.

The invitation from the pulpit, to come to the class for instruction and acquaintance preparatory to Communion in the Church, has been followed by the voluntary application of so many, each successive Sacramental season, as often to surprise the members of Session when the report was made to them. It is a reason for gratitude to-day, that in the use of the Word, and prayer and ordinances, intelligent faith, and not religious emotion simply, has largely been cultivated in the building and growth of the Christian life.

III. Consider the *fruits* of this church *life* and *growth*. The summarized reports of the different organizations for work have been given to the congregation each year. The report of the last year, will give full evidence of what we have striven to do, in all kinds of Christian work. It is the best and most complete of any we have yet issued. It will well repay thoughtful examination by each member and adherent.

In a church of two or three hundred members, each can easily know the other, and all can unite probably in three or four departments of work. In a church of a thousand members this is impossible. The obligation of our Lord "to every man his work," can only be met by classification and division into separate organizations. For effective teaching in Sabbath school this is true. To reach and engage every one, young and old, in mission schemes, there must be adaptation to age, and time and convenience, and taste of the different members. We find

it so in our congregational work. With no success or advantage could we do it except for our system of districts and three office bearers to each.

This is sometimes called machinery. But it is essential for the orderly doing of the work laid upon us by the providence of God. And I assure the congregation that for the success of work in our church, you are largely indebted to these voluntary servants of the church, the Elders, Deacons and Lady Visitors, who in their respective fields of labor, have been faithful to the Master and to the church they serve. When faithful workers have been removed from our fold, others have been found, willing and made ready by the Spirit to take up the work they laid down. And thus God has blessed us most abundantly.

The material upon which we are all called to work, in accord with the Spirit, is to be reached by personal influence and example.

This is the gospel order, and it harmonizes with the law of nature.

*Another fruit* which we must name to the praise of God's grace, is, *the co-workers we have in the great field of the world.* This is our substantial obedience to the last command. We have two members in China, one went to Corea, and one is in India. These brethren and sisters have drawn forth many prayers from our hearts, for blessing upon them, and upholding grace, in their distant fields of labor. And in return the rich, gracious showers of the Spirit's influence have descended upon us here. The material support of Christian ordinances at home, and the means to establish them, and for a time maintain them abroad, are good evidences of the real growth of Christians in knowledge and in life. And here we find a gratifying record in glancing at our statistics for ten years. In round numbers we have risen from \$6,000 to \$17,000 for home expenses, and from \$2,000 to \$15,000 for schemes of the Church and other benevolent societies. This growth has been gradual and healthful, not spasmodic or fitful. The grand total of contributions from the congregation has been \$187,821, and of this sum \$83,794 have been given to the schemes of the Church and other benevolent objects. Though we have a slight decrease in our membership, from removal to other congregations, the present year in our church, the offerings to *schemes* and *benevolence* were \$3,500 beyond any former year of the church, and the total amount given \$2,500 beyond any previous year of our history. This certainly is a good evidence of increasing interest, and of a growing sense of responsibility for our trusts as stewards of God's bounty.

*Another evidence of spiritual prosperity* for which we are to-day profoundly grateful to our Lord, is *the attendance* upon the regular services of the church. The average attendance, the first year of my ministry here, was, morning 611, evening 612 ; the last year, morning 695, evening 725. The average attendance for the ten years, morning 740, evening 783. When we consider the distance of residence from the church, the fluctuations of the weather, and the many who are invalids, this may be regarded as a good fruit of the work of this congregation.

As your pastor, I have striven in these years to be devoted to my responsible work, as before the Lord, and then to this church and congregation as your servant in Him. I have prepared and preached to you 873 sermons. There have been 347 baptisms, 260 marriages, 244 funerals, 528 prayer-meetings, 700 classes for instruction, 1860 meetings outside, in connection with church and benevolent and charitable institutions ; making in all 4,565 appointments attended by me, and 7,000 pastoral calls.

These varied duties convey but little knowledge of the influences and results of labors that depend for saving effect and impression on the Holy Spirit. These we cannot measure, and eternity alone will give the true estimate of all services that have been bestowed by pastor and people in the Name of the Master. The hearty cöoperation of earnest and faithful office-bearers in all the branches of our work, is worthy of great commendation. The helpful response of the people in all matters of necessary outlay, both for home and foreign expenditure in church work is a mark of your Christian growth.

The kindest consideration for the wants of your pastor, and a ready answer to his appeals for mission work, and for the endowment funds of the Church have ever been shown. I need only allude to your special sympathy and tokens of regard, when affliction of the sorest kind befell me, in the third year of my ministry, and again, your thoughtfulness for my health and comfort two years since, when from your kind suggestion I was enabled to visit the land so dear to most of this congregation.

Your kind interest in the cause of foreign missions is seen in the fund accumulating for use in Honan at the earliest practicable moment, now reaching with the sacrificial offering of one of our members on the field, the sum of \$4,500, and also for college endowment the sum of \$12,000, and for the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, \$2,500. In addition to these special investments, the small sums given by a large

number in proportion to their ability, and each one enclosed in the prayer of faith, constitute an abiding offering of sweet-smelling savor before the Lord, which shall never be forgotten.

“Honor the Lord with thy substance,” in the “grace of giving,” is one of the most practical fruits of holiness that can adorn a christian life.

Did time permit I should love to refer to the testimonies that have been given me by many whom I address, as well as from strangers providentially present with us in our meetings—of the great benefit derived from the unfolding of God’s word to them by His Spirit, in this house and in the lecture room. These immediate fruits of life and character, wherein the distinctive evidence of supernatural grace is seen and felt, are the most precious, because they will endure forever. They will be admired by all Holy Beings, as jewels of the rarest water, because their lustre and eternal brightness will continually reveal, illustrate and magnify, the abounding grace and infinite love of our God and Father in Jesus Christ.

IV. There are many *precious memories* connected with this *decade* of years.

I cannot forget the large number removed from our roll ; about one-tenth have been taken away by death, and of these, nearly one-twentieth were in office at the time of their removal.

The first *one* called from our session to higher service, was the warm-hearted and genial Richard S. Brodie, who was one of the first to greet me on my arrival here, and was diligent and faithful in all his labors of love. He was removed from these earthly scenes in 1882, just after the deep bereavement of my own house, when the tenderest sympathies had been excited, and we all mourned deeply at our separation from him. The next year the Hon. John McMurrich, after a peaceful and gentle descent to the grave for some months, was speedily convoyed by angels to the presence of his Lord. His heart had been for years bound up in the interests of this church, and he rejoiced greatly in the spiritual prosperity he was permitted to witness. He was a pillar for the defence of the truth, and his loyalty to Christ was ever manifested in a christian and holy life. His influence and his works still remain to testify of his devotion.

In 1884, James Livingstone, the sweet singer in our Israel, was suddenly summoned, and joyfully went to abide with his Lord. His work in Duchess street mission will long be remembered as his

monument. In 1885, Robert McJanet, a faithful elder was called to his rest. In 1887, Mr. James Fleming, an old resident of this city, and for many years an office-bearer in Knox Church as trustee, was removed by death, and the same year another trustee died, Dr. John Fulton, respected and honored in his profession. The last year, three of our brethren, well-known and beloved, one from the session, Mr. James H. Fyfe, and two who had been in the Deacons' court, Mr. Geo. Macdonald and Mr. James M. Simpson, were carried to rest, after severe sufferings by lingering disease. Mr. George Sutherland, for many years a member of the session of this church, and who withdrew from office two years ago, to connect with another congregation, though still a member with us, died last December.

These all, we believe, died in the faith, and their works survive them. Influences from their lives are still working and will not be ended till time shall cease. Of honored women, too, who have borne part in the service of Christ, we recall several names, who were faithful in every good work : Mrs. Noble Stitt so active in all benevolence, will be remembered by the older members of the congregation ; Miss Ann Cherry, the faithful district visitor ; Miss Gordon, whose devoted interests in this church and its work was unabated to the end of her active life ; and last, but recently taken from her loved home, Mrs. Thos. McCracken—a long time in this membership, and prominently active in mission and church work—though connected, the last two years, with the new Bloor Street Presbyterian Church. We miss the familiar faces of those who labored with us here during the brief years we review, but as we are sustained by the unfaltering hope set forth in our text, we may see them glorified with our Lord, and radiant with the reflected light of His countenance.

We all regret the separation of esteemed office-bearers and co-workers to other churches in the city, organized within the last two years. Messrs Blaikie (for a long period senior member of our session). McLeod, Manser, and Northey are thus connected with these churches. Rev. Thomas Lowrey, Mr. Walter Turnbull, and Mr. William Thomson have withdrawn from the session, resigning their position either from absence from the city, or from ill-health after years of faithful service.

From the Trustees Mr. Thomas McCracken, for many years, the efficient treasurer of the congregation, and Mr. James Webster, have removed to other congregations ; their unwearied and diligent services while with us are held in grateful remembrance.

V. We look forward as well as backward. The review prompts the *outlook*.

Within the ten years past, fifteen new Presbyterian Pastors, now in charge, have been inducted in the city. Within two years past nine new Presbyterian churches have been organized in the city and suburbs. We have sent to these churches and to some of the older ones, within this time, 124 members. Many who were our best workers are now actively engaged in the same work on these new grounds. We do not begrudge them, for the Lord's work is one. But we do find reason for a strong appeal to those who have not volunteered for service, to now come forward and take the vacant places. More is to be done than ever before if we hold our own in the tide of increasing population. The city has a hundred thousand more people than ten years ago. Then we had eleven Presbyterian Churches, now twenty. Then 454 members, now near a thousand. The field around this church building is more needy than ever. Thorough organization of our forces is an actual necessity. The city between Queen street and the Bay, from Sherbourne to York, is our field, with no one else to till it. The mission at Duchess street is doing noble work, but needs reinforcements. Another centre of operation should be opened near York street, and special effort should be put forth in that leprous portion of the city. Those who will stand up for Christ in this church from our younger members, have now the golden opportunity. What is done to maintain the ancient good name of this city, must be done speedily, or the effort will be too late to prevent the usual surplusage of large cities, from taking the crown of righteousness from us. Let us look from the earth to the heavens above. From the consideration of the things seen to those that are unseen. From the machinery and the men, to the source of power, and to the Personal God. His grace is peculiarly manifested in His word and His Spirit.

1. We have the Word of God : " For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." To this as the foundation I trace all the good results we have recounted. This filled my heart with joy the first time I looked upon this congregation. The Bible open in the hands of the hearers—the *eye* and the *ear* open upon the Word—two ready inlets for the Spirit to use in impressing the heart. Long may this good habit continue. May the parents give the example and all the children follow.

2. The Spirit in the Word. He alone can attract our attention and

hold it. He does it by revealing the Christ to us. The word Personal speaks as we do through *oral* and *written* words. Thus God arrests attention. A forgotten text springs from memory's treasure-box, often in the night time, and gives light, and life and power. Redouble all efforts at seed-sowing in the family and school. Never give over, "The Spirit breathes upon the Word," "and brings the truth to sight." He will *sanctify* through the *truth*. "Thy *word* is truth."

3. The consecrated life. "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ;" denying ungodliness and every worldly lust—saying "No" to the tempter, in business, in pleasure, in religious service. Saying "No" to every inward lust, which under the plea of sickness—or health—of propriety, or education, or enjoyment—assumes the guise to deceive. This is negative. We cannot empty the heart and leave it with safety unfilled. We are to *live*, not act. It must be life. We are to live "*soberly, righteously and godly* in this present world." A positive religion is the only one that can resist the tide of this world. No compromise with custom, with any devices of the Evil One, disguised only to deceive us, and bring us into a deadly bondage. This is individual equipment, before we touch work.

4. The motive power of life. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Unless we are risen with Him by faith we cannot have *this hope*. But as we are looking unto Jesus *because* risen with Him, we shall certainly be filled with the same expectation which is upon his heart. The Head and the Members of the Body are one. If He is waiting to be manifested in glory on this earth, we are to be like Him there—and this is the hope that kindles action. While longing to see Him, gazing upon Him by faith, the Spirit reveals our freedom from condemnation—from the power of sin—from all iniquity—and thus separated to Him—as a purchased treasure—a pearl of great price. And for what all this expenditure on *you* and *me*.

5. That we may be *zealous of good works*. "Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Because we have been redeemed—let us yield ourselves wholly unto Him. Because He has saved me from the abyss, let my life, my time, my substance, be all held at His gracious disposal. Let my zeal be kindled



every day, by the sight of His loving, patient, smiling glance—as I am striving to do those things that are pleasing in His sight. May this work of the Spirit fill our hearts. For what, has my Saviour *redeemed* me, and *sanctified* me? That He may have me wholly for Himself—His *own* at all times—“zealous of good works.”

Let us, dearly beloved, renew our consecration to God in His house—in response to His urgent call—“Here we offer and present unto Thee, O, Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee,” and in the gifted words of Miss Havergal, let the offering be personal and individual.

“Take my life, and let it be,  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.”

“Take my *lips*, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.”

“Take my *silver* and my *gold*,  
Not a mite would I withhold.”

“Take my *will*, and make it thine:  
It shall be no longer mine.”

“Take my *heart*, it is *Thine* own;  
It shall be *Thy* royal throne.”

“TAKE MYSELF, and I will be  
Ever, only, *all* for Thee.”

---













